

Newton Blossomville Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110405
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	337493
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Swanston
Headteacher	Georgina Gunn
Date of previous school inspection	0 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited nine lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning, the school's assessment information and safeguarding policies, and samples of pupils' work. He analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 16 from parents.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils use basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum
- how well leaders use data to check the progress of different groups of pupils
- how effectively governors monitor the work of the school and provide challenge
- how much pupils enjoy school and get involved in the community, and the effectiveness of strategies to promote good attendance.

Information about the school

About half of the pupils come to this very small rural school from the local village, with the rest travelling from further afield. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is very low. There are three year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage; they work together or separately at different times during the day according to what is being taught. The main classroom is in the village's 'Reading Room' which is rented for this purpose.

The school has an Activemark for its work in physical education, Healthy School accreditation and was awarded the Basic Skills Mark in 2008.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

One parent accurately captured the essence of this outstanding school when commenting that 'the school has a really lovely atmosphere and the children are happy and genuinely care for each other'. Pupils learn extremely important values such as respect, politeness and good manners, as well as growing enormously in confidence and self-esteem. This means that the school is giving its pupils a very strong foundation for the next stage of their education and for later life.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they benefit from excellent teaching that takes very good account of how young children learn. Pupils continue to make very fast progress in the rest of the school and standards are high by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Excellent teaching and the opportunities to work in very small groups for much of each day contribute greatly to this outstanding achievement. Because groups are so small, teachers are able to respond quickly to individual needs, providing learning that is truly personalised for each pupil. Very skilled teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to the success of the school, and they provide excellent support when working with pupils, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Adults provide very high quality care for the pupils and ensure that they become very responsible citizens. Pupils greatly enjoy school and sum up their views with comments such as: 'It's the best place to be', and, 'I like the teachers because they help me when I need it.' The school plans an excellent curriculum that promotes basic skills extremely well. Pupils get many opportunities to use their reading, writing and numeracy skills in different subjects and this helps to make learning very purposeful. Provision for ICT is developing well; the school has recently purchased new equipment and rightly staff are now focusing on ensuring that this is used to best effect across all subjects to support learning.

The pupils are brilliant ambassadors for the school. There is a delightful atmosphere in lessons because pupils behave exceptionally well and always try their best. Relationships between classmates and adults are superb, with everyone helping each other when needed. This means that there is a consistently fast pace to learning. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community by taking part in local events and working very closely with other schools and groups. Pupils very keenly take responsibility and are thoughtful about the needs of others. For example, they raise funds for a local charity which supports the homeless. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about life in other parts of the world through activities such as visits from African drummers and a recent day when they learnt about life in Ghana. However, pupils get few opportunities to meet with pupils from social or cultural backgrounds that are different from their own so that

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they can develop an even stronger understanding of life beyond Newton Blossomville. This is a school that is not resting on its laurels. The school is so successful because leaders have created an ethos in which all members of the school community are valued and respected. Teamwork is very strong and there is a strong drive for further improvement based on very thorough systems for checking what is going well and what needs improving. The reflective and purposeful leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has continued to move forward very quickly since the last inspection. Governors provide excellent support and challenge to the school. They share the headteacher's ambitions and have helped to maintain high standards since the last inspection. Together, leaders are very well placed to realise their aspirations for the school and to improve provision even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' understanding of life beyond the local community by providing them with opportunities to meet with children from different social and cultural backgrounds (by July 2010).
- Make more use of new ICT resources to support learning in different subjects (by July 2010).

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils' excellent achievement is reflected in their great enjoyment of school and their love for learning. In lessons pupils work hard and have very positive attitudes towards learning, resulting in progress being excellent most of the time. In a science lesson in Year 2, pupils made very rapid progress when learning about how heat can affect materials because they were able to experience the changes for themselves and were encouraged to think like scientists as they tried to explain what they had observed. They talked with great enthusiasm and were able to draw sensible scientific conclusions from their experiments, reflecting very secure skills and understanding. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils quickly improved their writing skills because they were challenged to do their best work and were encouraged to try to spell new words for themselves, applying their knowledge of letter sounds that they had been taught earlier.

Attainment is consistently high in national assessments at the end of Year 2, and these high standards are also evident in pupils' day-to-day work. Throughout the school, girls and boys do equally well. The very small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as others, with most reaching at least the nationally expected levels for their age by the end of Year 2.

There are very strong links with the local Anglican church which foster spiritual development particularly well; pupils happily write prayers for others and think about how they can help those who are less fortunate than themselves. They learn to take very good care of each other and they behave very sensibly. The positive impact of the work completed in gaining the national Healthy School award is reflected in the pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They grow their own food in

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the school garden and make very sensible choices about what they are going to eat. Pupils talk very knowledgeably about the dangers they may face in later life; for example, they are very clear about what rules they should follow when using the internet.

Rates of attendance are above average and are much improved over the last two years. The school has done a great deal to improve attendance, although, despite the school's excellent efforts to discourage it, some parents still take their children on holidays during term time. When this happens, the school gives pupils work to take with them and this means that the impact on learning is comparatively small.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

This small school's size is its great strength. Adults know every pupil and treat them all as part of the 'school family'. Pupils do so well because teaching is very effective at meeting their differing needs. Teaching is almost always pitched at the right level for all, meaning that work builds very closely on pupils' different starting points. Teachers use assessment for learning very sharply, both to plan the next stage of learning and also to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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help pupils understand how they can improve their work. When marking work, teachers often write helpful comments in books to identify what could be improved. They also set challenging targets for pupils to aim for so that they are always striving to do better.

There is a very happy working atmosphere throughout the school day; adults and pupils get on very well together and learning is made fun. Teachers respond very sensitively to the pupils' own ideas; for example, in Year 1, the teacher very effectively led a discussion on some new artefacts brought in by a pupil so that learning about domestic life in the past was extended significantly.

Pupils feel safe and secure and they know what to do if they have a worry; as one said, 'There is always someone to help us.' The school works very well with outside agencies to find additional help when it is needed; for example, excellent liaison between the headteacher, governors and the educational welfare officer had a significant impact on improving attendance in the last academic year.

The curriculum is very broad and takes excellent account of pupils' interests and aptitudes. Basic skills are promoted exceptionally well, although provision is slightly weaker in ICT than in numeracy and literacy because improved resources are relatively new and their use is not yet embedded across all subjects. There is very good enrichment of the curriculum. An exciting range of clubs and visits support learning very well; for example, pupils learn about healthy eating and the world of work from a local beekeeper.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other staff are passionate about providing high-quality care and support for children and their families and this is reflected in all aspects of their work. The school's ambitions and the very strong drive for improvement are very firmly embedded, with members of staff and governors providing excellent challenge and support to the headteacher.

There are excellent systems for evaluating school effectiveness, including the very sharp use of data to check how well the school is doing and to identify any pupils who are in danger of falling behind in their work. Such pupils are given high quality support in lessons, ensuring that they soon get back on track.

The school promotes equality very successfully. Leaders ensure that all pupils do equally

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well and have equal opportunities to participate in school events. There is no discrimination because pupils learn to respect different beliefs. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. There are close links with the local community and pupils learn a lot about life in other countries. Leaders have recently carried out an audit of provision in this area and have rightly identified that pupils do not get enough opportunities to meet others from different backgrounds to develop further their knowledge of life in multicultural Britain.

The school has excellent safeguarding procedures. At the time of the inspection, national guidelines in this area were fully met, and the school is very vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that pupils may encounter. For example, the school has very imaginatively tackled potential dangers from berries off a yew tree in the churchyard by ensuring that it is hard for them to fall onto the playground.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When they start school, most children are working at or above the levels expected for their age, and excellent teaching means that attainment rises to well-above-average levels by the start of Year 1. There is a delightful atmosphere in lessons, with children supporting each other well and working hard at all times. Adults work together very closely to ensure that work is closely matched to need. There is a fast pace to learning in lessons, with Reception Year children benefiting enormously from working alongside older pupils for part of each day, for example when being taught about letter sounds. Children are very

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well cared for, which helps them to settle quickly when they first start school. They get excellent opportunities to explore their own ideas and to take responsibility for their own learning, especially through role play. When they do this, adults intervene at just the right time to move learning on. For example, children's learning when exploring the properties of light and dark by making their own cave using blankets and a climbing frame was significantly enhanced by astute questioning that introduced new ideas to the work. Adults plan numerous outdoor activities in each day. This compensates very effectively for the limitations in accommodation which mean that children cannot have free access to outdoor learning throughout the day.

Provision is led and managed very well. The staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn, and they monitor progress very closely so that they know what they need to teach next.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents are almost unanimously delighted with all aspects of the school's work. They all feel that their children are well looked after, are happy and enjoy their learning. Parents' views are typically summed up in comments such as, 'My son's education is greatly enhanced by being in a small school environment', and 'The school provides a wonderful start to a child's education and is particularly good at building each pupil's confidence.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newton Blossomville CE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 26 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	75	4	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	75	2	13	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	81	2	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	88	2	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	63	1	6	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	88	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	88	2	13	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	81	2	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newton Blossomville CE School, MK43 8AL

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for showing me your work. You were very polite and friendly and I enjoyed talking to you. I agree with you that your school is excellent, and that staff do a lot to help you.

Some of the things I found out about your school:

- You are supported very well and excellent teaching helps you to learn new things very quickly throughout the school. This means that you reach high standards by the end of Year 2.
- Younger children get a super start in the Reception Year, where you work together well and settle very quickly.
- You really enjoy school because adults make learning exciting by planning many fun activities both in and out of lessons.
- You behave exceptionally well and take responsibility very sensibly. I am pleased that the school council does such a good job of representing your views.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and healthy. It is great that you are growing your own food in the school garden!
- Your teachers and other adults are very kind and caring and they give you high-quality support when you are struggling with your work.
- The school is led and managed very well and all the adults are working very hard to make the school even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

This is what I have asked your school to do now:

- help you to learn more about life beyond Newton Blossomville by letting you meet, play and work with children from backgrounds that are different from your own
- give you more opportunities to use your new laptops and interactive whiteboard to support learning in different subjects.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. You can help your teachers by continuing always to do your best.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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